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## Atlantis close to launch readiness



◆ **Shuttle Update:** At Launch Pad 39A, orbiter aft closeout work has begun on **Atlantis** and external tank/solid rocket booster closeouts are underway. Other work this week will include EVA spacesuit checkout, liquid hydrogen 2 storage tank top-off, ordnance installation and connection. On Friday, senior management will meet for the flight readiness review, determining the final launch date. On Dec. 3, payload bay doors will close for launch and the countdown will begin at 7 p.m.

In Orbiter Processing Facility bay No. 2, integrated testing of the main engines and the main propulsion system continues on **Endeavour**. Testing of the orbiter's three-string GPS system, which provides guidance on re-entry, is complete.

The functional test on the star tracker door is complete. Window No. 7 has been removed and replaced. The payload bay door functional test is finished, as well as installation of BRI tile around the perimeter of the right main landing gear door. Checkout of the Shuttle to Station Power Transfer System is complete.

In high bay No. 1 of the Vehicle Assembly Building, stacking of the left solid rocket booster is under way. Stacking of the right booster is scheduled to begin this week.

◆ **NASA Update:** NASA recently announced a change in space shuttle crew assignments for next year's STS-126 mission: Astronaut Donald R. Pettit will take the place of astronaut Joan E.

Higginbotham, who has left NASA to accept a position in the private sector. The mission is targeted for launch in September 2008 and will deliver equipment to the International Space Station enabling larger crews to reside aboard the complex. For the full story, visit: [http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2007/nov/HQ\\_07259\\_STS-126\\_crew\\_change.html](http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2007/nov/HQ_07259_STS-126_crew_change.html).

Higginbotham flew as a mission specialist on STS-116 in December 2006. She began her career at Kennedy Space Center in 1987, contributing to 53 space shuttle launches. She was selected as an astronaut in 1996.

The STS-126 mission will be Pettit's second spaceflight. Pettit will serve as a mission specialist aboard shuttle Endeavour. He joins previously named crew members Commander Christopher J. Ferguson, Pilot Eric A. Boe and Mission Specialists Stephen G. Bowen, Robert S. Kimbrough and Heidemarie M. Stefanyshyn-Piper.

Pettit first flew as a crew member of Expedition 6, logging more than 161 days in space, including more than 13 hours during two spacewalks. He launched to the station aboard shuttle mission STS-113 in November 2002 and returned to Earth on the Soyuz TMA-1 spacecraft in May 2003. He was selected as an astronaut in 1996.



### ■ Holiday Walking

**Group** — To celebrate the holiday season and keep off excess holiday pounds, the KSC Health Education and Wellness Program will lead a walking group on

## Crew changes for mission in 2008

Tuesdays and Thursdays starting today through Dec. 20. The group will walk from 11 to 11:30 a.m. around the O&C Fitness Trail (located in front of the O&C Building – Industrial Area). As an extra incentive, the KSC Fitness Centers will have their new Nordic walking poles available for holiday walkers to try out. The addition of Nordic walking poles (used like cross-country skis on the ground) to regular walking can result in an average 13-percent increase in heart rate and expenditure of 70 percent more calories! So keep an extra pair of walking shoes at work and come on out! The group will be canceled for the day if it is raining during walking time.

■ **O&C Blood Drive** — Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please bring a photo ID with your first and last name on it. Walk-ins are welcome, or for an appointment, please e-mail Lillian Belmont at [LBelmont@floridabloodcenters.org](mailto:LBelmont@floridabloodcenters.org).

All blood donors will receive: a Club Red Program, \$10 Publix Gift Card, coupon for free coffee at Dunkin' Donuts, 50 percent off admission to "Ice!" at Gaylord Palms, free admission to Marine Land and 50 percent off a 1-day/2-park ticket or 2-day/2-park ticket to Universal Orlando (all coupons and discount tickets will be given at the time of donation).

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